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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 STATE 100219

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TAGS: [OVIP](#) [RICE](#) [CONDOLEZZA](#) [PREL](#) [PHSA](#) [SP](#) [KV](#) [CU](#)
BL, IS
SUBJECT: Secretary Rice's 09/16/2008 Meeting with Spanish Ambassador Dezcallar

¶1. (U) Classified by EUR A/S Daniel Fried. Reason 1.4(b) and (d).

¶2. (U) September 16, 2008; 11 a.m.; Secretary's Office.

¶3. (U) Participants:

U.S.
The Secretary
EUR A/DAS Nerissa Cook
EUR/WE Stacie Zerdecki (Notetaker)

Spain
Ambassador Jorge Dezcallar
DCM Jose Pascual Marco

¶4. (C) SUMMARY. Recently arrived Spanish Ambassador Jorge Dezcallar made a courtesy call on Secretary Rice to discuss the bilateral relationship. Dezcallar opened by saying he was asked to personally deliver a message from the King of Spain of his desire to improve relations. They discussed their shared concern over recent developments in Bolivia and Venezuela, the need for real change in Cuba under Raul Castro, Moratinos' positive role in the Middle East, and differences over Kosovo. Dezcallar closed by requesting the Secretary's support for Spain's 2010 candidacy in the Human Rights Council. The Secretary wished Spain luck and commented on Spain's strong human rights record, but admitted that the U.S. is not active in the Council and doesn't view it as a functioning organization. END SUMMARY.

Bilateral Relationship

¶5. (SBU) Ambassador Dezcallar expressed his intention "to work very hard to improve relations during his tenure" as ambassador to the United States. He relayed to the Secretary that he had spoken to both the King of Spain and Foreign Minister Moratinos in the past two days and both expressed their wish to strengthen the bilateral relationship. Both the Secretary and Dezcallar agreed that relations are good between the two countries, but there is room for improvement.

Bolivia and Venezuela

¶6. (C) Almost immediately, the conversation turned to recent events in Venezuela and Bolivia. Dezcallar and the Secretary agreed that while both situations are

domestic problems, they are developing into crises of international concern. The Secretary noted that while she sympathizes with the Bolivian people, the Bolivian regime is making it very difficult for the United States to help them. Dezcällar agreed that the Bolivian people are suffering, and that resolution is "through consultation, not violence." Both agreed that Bolivian President Morales is "out of his league" in his attempts to govern the country.

¶7. (C) On Venezuela, Ambassador Dezcällar recounted how he was forced to wait three hours for a meeting with Chavez several years ago, then heard mindless chatter from Chavez for a few hours before being allowed to make his official request for Venezuela to turn over 6 ETA members wanted for killing 36 Spaniards. When Dezcällar was finally able to make his appeal, Chavez readily agreed. Only when Dezcällar got out of the meeting did he learn that Chavez stalled for enough time to let the ETA members escape from detention. The Secretary responded that the United States has found that ignoring Chavez is the best policy, and the lack of attention frustrates him more than admonition.

Cuba

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¶8. (C) The Secretary stated she remains unconvinced of the sincerity of minor post-Fidel changes in Cuba. She emphasized the need to make real change, as opposed to cosmetic ones. For example, Cubans should have access to cell phones and the Internet. The Ambassador countered that GoS doesn't think that changes in Cuba since Raul's ascent to power have been cosmetic. He denied that Raul is another Fidel, but warned against being too heavy-handed and "scaring him off, or he will be even more difficult."

¶9. (U) Dezcällar commented that Cuba is going through hard times this hurricane season, and the Secretary confirmed that the United States has already offered humanitarian aid.

Kosovo

¶10. (C) Turning to Europe, the Secretary asked if there was any chance Spain would recognize Kosovo. Dezcällar demurred "not any time soon." The Secretary replied that she hoped Spain would not recognize the breakaway Georgian provinces of South Ossetia or Abkhazia, and Dezcällar assured her they would not.

Middle East Peace

¶11. (C) The Secretary and Ambassador Dezcällar briefly discussed the Israeli/Palestinian peace process and Foreign Minister Moratinos' whirlwind trip through the region September 12-17. Secretary Rice said that Moratinos has been helpful in the Middle East, and made reference to her trilateral meeting with Israeli Foreign Minister Livni and the head of the Palestinian negotiating team, Abu Alaa, on August 26, 2008. The Secretary and Dezcällar agreed that the situation was not all bad and noted that Palestinian forces are taking on more responsibility.

Human Rights Council

¶12. (C) Mirroring FM Moratinos' request to the

Secretary during their May 19 meeting, Ambassador Dezcollar again asked for the United States' support of Spanish candidacy to the Human Rights Council in the next election (2010). Similar to her response then, the Secretary said the U.S. may not vote at all, as she considers the council a "disaster." However, she noted that the council needed countries with good human rights records, like Spain, to hold seats.

RICE